

Application No. 09/926,609
Reply to Office Action of July 7, 2004

REMARKS

Applicants would like to thank Examiner Uhlir for the helpful and courteous interview kindly granted on October 20, 2004. During the interview, Mr. Lafon explained the relevant market for refrigerated door enclosures, and Ms Grussaute-Nghiem provided a short presentation regarding St. Gobain's anti-frost glass coatings, and their ability to handle ambient moisture upon exposure to higher temperature/humidity conditions. Also in attendance were Messrs. Lebas and Leconte, both of St. Gobain, and the undersigned.

As discussed during the interview, the antifrosting adsorbent layer as now claimed is free of particulates, and instead consists essentially of a polymeric coating. This language, "consists essentially of," distinguishes the pending claims from Scholz by excluding the inorganic metal particles in Scholz that create voids by packing together, thus materially affecting the basic and novel properties of the coating.¹ In fact, in Scholz, the polymer component of the disclosed coatings is, in essence, an afterthought, and is described as an optional "binder" for the critical inorganic metal oxide particles.²

Finally, and as recognized in the Official Action, Scholz does not relate to articles for a refrigerated environment, but instead to articles subject to "fog," meaning articles like face shields, ophthalmic lenses, etc.³ While, e.g., architectural glazings, windows, and automotive windshields are suggested in the reference, none of these items are subject to refrigerated

¹ See, e.g., col. 4, lines 23-25 of Scholz: "The term "porous" refers to the presence of voids between the inorganic metal oxide particles created when the particles pack together."

² See, e.g., col. 19, line 57 ff: "The coating composition may optionally contain a polymeric binder to improve scratch resistance and/or adhesion of the coating composition to the substrate."

³ See, e.g., col 1, line 7 ff: "This invention relates generally to coating compositions and methods for producing optically clear articles with very low reflection and exceptional anti-fogging properties even under high humidity conditions. Such properties are desirable in articles such as face shields used for personal protection, ophthalmic lenses, architectural glazings, windows, automotive windshields and the like."

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conditions, nor do they need to remain frost-free.⁴ In this regard, note that by "anti-fog"

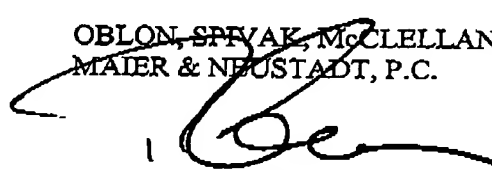
Scholz refers to a test where his coating resists a person's breath, and steam.⁵

Thus, it is clear that articles described in the prior art as "anti-fog," and subjected to steam-testing, are quite different from anti-frost refrigerator door enclosures as presently claimed. Moreover, and with regard to Scholz, Applicant has distinguished their claims therefrom by excluding from the claimed antifrosting adsorbent layer the particles that are critical to the operational characteristics of the Scholz coating.

For these reasons, and in view of the arguments presented at the interview as summarized above, Applicant respectfully requests the reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections, and the passage of this case to Issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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⁴ In fact, in common experience, architectural glazings, windows, and automotive windshields are not frost-free.

⁵ See col. 5, line 30 ff: "The coating compositions of the present invention provide anti-fog properties, in addition to anti-reflection, to substrates coated therewith. Coatings are considered anti-fogging if a coated substrate resists the formation of small, condensed water droplets in sufficient density to significantly reduce the transparency of the coated substrate such that it cannot be adequately seen through, after exposure to repeated human breathing directly on the article and/or after holding the article above a "steam" jet."